

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Chet Edwards announced that he has secured federal funding for Brazos County law enforcement, transportation and Texas A&M in the final 2010 Appropriations bill. The bill passed the House today by a vote of 221 to 202, and is expected to pass the Senate and be signed into law this month.

Edwards secured funding that will help the Texas Engineering Extension Service train law enforcement personnel to respond to violent emergencies, help the Bryan Police Department train forensic investigators, and upgrade communications technology for the Brazos County Sheriff's Department.

Specifically, Edwards added \$1.3 million for the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) program at Texas A&M. This program, administered by the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) provides critical training for law enforcement officers, National Guard, Reserve and Active Duty service members who are the first to respond to acts of violence in our communities. Over 17,000 officers have engaged in this effective training since 2002 including 500 officers in the Brazos Valley and throughout Edwards' 17th district. **Sergeant Kimberly Munley, the officer who stopped the gunman at Fort Hood, was trained by the ALERRT program**

. In addition to the \$1.3 million added by Edwards to the 2010 bill, Edwards has secured \$1.2 million for ALERRT since 2005.

**Edwards, a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee** said, *"This vital homeland security program at Texas A&M plays an integral role in saving the lives of our citizens and our police officers as they respond to a wide array of dangerous law enforcement situations. ALERRT has trained over 500 law enforcement personnel in District 17 as well as Sergeant Kimberly Munley, the brave officer who used her training to stop the gunman at Fort Hood."*

said

Edwards.

*"The training provided by ALERRT will help law enforcement quickly respond to protect our communities in the event of a violent attack."*

Edwards also secured \$500,000 for The Texas Forensic Science Academy, a joint effort of the Texas Engineering Extension Service and Texas A&M University, which trains and educates Texas law enforcement professionals, prosecutors, public defenders and judges to promote proper crime scene investigation, evidence collection/preservation, courtroom presentation and application. The program aims to increase accuracy in the Texas legal system, increase arrests supported by clear and convincing evidence, and reduce mistrials and exonerations saving potentially millions in state tax dollars. No such comprehensive training program currently exists in the nation.

*"The goal of training provided by the Texas Forensic Science Academy is to help strengthen the Texas criminal justice system by promoting comprehensive forensic investigations," said Edwards.*

**Peter M. Scheets, Deputy Chief of the Bryan Police Department** said, *"The Texas Forensic Science Academy provides law enforcement professionals with training in the many disciplines associated with crime scene investigation. The Bryan Police Department enthusiastically supports the Academy and firmly believes that the training provided is needed throughout the forensic community. Rebecca Wendt, who currently serves as a Crime Scene Technician with our agency is scheduled to be one of the first graduates of the Academy, and is excelling in the field due to the training she has received. This is a unique program not just in the State of Texas but the nation. It is our intent to continue to endorse and support the program."*

Edwards also secured \$200,000 to help the Brazos County Sheriff's Department improve coordination between the police department, fire department, EMS, and other emergency personnel by upgrading vital communications technology. This will ensure quicker response times and more open lines of communication between departments.

*"I believe we have an obligation to work closely with local law enforcement to protect our families. This new equipment will help our officers respond more quickly to emergency calls with the information they need to protect our families," said Edwards.*

**Brazos County Sheriff Chris Kirk** said, *"We are thankful to Congressman Edwards and his staff for this needed funding, and appreciate his support of Brazos County Law Enforcement."*

Edwards also secured \$400,000 to help the Brazos Transit District, in cooperation with Brazos County and the City of Bryan, complete construction for the downtown transit terminal and parking facility to be located next to the Brazos County Courthouse. The facility will also include offices for Brazos County's Adult Probation, and much-needed parking for city and county employees.

*"Improving transportation infrastructure in Brazos County will benefit the local economy and*

*help address the needs of growing community. By completing construction on the transit terminal and parking facility, we will encourage transit usage, which will reduce traffic congestion, and improve quality of life for local families," said Edwards.*

**John McBeth, President and CEO of The District** says that the funds will be added to existing \$5 million dollars of funding that Congressman Edwards has already obtained for The District in past appropriations bills as well as the \$2.7 million in Recovery Act funding that the congressman assisted The District in obtaining this year. This brings the total committed federal funding to \$8.1 million of the projected \$18 million dollar project.

*"We are just thrilled beyond words at the level of support and dedication that Congressman Edwards has consistently shown for this very much needed development for the citizens of Brazos County. This project would not have been possible without his hard work and assistance," McBeth said.*

Finally, Edwards secured \$750,000 for Texas A&M for space engineering and robotics technologies. Texas A&M's robotics research will enable multiple robots to collaborate under human supervision in exploration activities for NASA.

*"Developing new robotics technology for NASA is an important responsibility for Texas A&M that will help us all learn more about our universe and may help develop technologies that will help us here at home," said Edwards.*